

Cambridge English Certificates as a Potential Advantage for Employability in the Zlín Region

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Bachelor's Thesis
2018



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur
akademický rok: 2017/2018

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Anna Lubojatzká**
Osobní číslo: **H14775**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Jazykové certifikáty Cambridge English jako potenciální výhoda pro zaměstnatelnost ve Zlínském kraji**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Shromáždění a studium odborné literatury
Formulace cílů a zaměření práce
Teoretické zpracování tématu
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Zpracování, analýza a interpretace dat z dotazníkového šetření
Formulace závěru práce

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tištěná/elektronická

Seznam odborné literatury:

British Council. 2017. "Our Organization." Accessed October 26, 2017.
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation>.

Cambridge English. 2017. "Exams and Tests". Accessed October 26, 2017.
<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/>.

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Fulcher, Glenn, and Fred Davidson. 2007. Language Testing and Assessment: An Advance Resource Book. London: Routledge.

Cambridge ESOL. 2011. Using the CEFR: Principles of a Good Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge ESOL.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

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Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

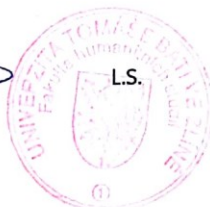
10. listopadu 2017

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

4. května 2018

Ve Zlíně dne 8. ledna 2018


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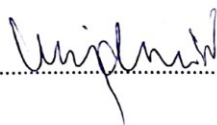
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ABSTRAKT

Tématem mé bakalářské práce je výzkum významu jazykových certifikátů Cambridge English a jejich potenciální výhody v procesu přijímání nových zaměstnanců ve Zlínském kraji. Teoretická část se v prvních kapitolách zabývá organizací Cambridge Assessment a jazykovými zkouškami, které organizace poskytuje. V dalších kapitolách teoretické části se práce zabývá charakteristikou jazykových úrovní Společného evropského referenčního rámce a příslušných zkoušek Cambridge English. Praktická část analyzuje výsledky dotazníkového šetření a hodnotí stanovené hypotézy.

Klíčová slova:

Cambridge Assessment, Společný evropský referenční rámec, jazykové certifikáty, hodnocení jazykových schopností, zaměstnatelnost

ABSTRACT

The topic of my bachelor thesis is the investigation of the importance of the Cambridge English language certificates and their potential advantage in the recruitment process in the Zlín region. The first chapters of the theoretical part deal with the Cambridge Assessment organisation and language examinations provided by them. The following chapters of the theoretical part deal with the description of the Common European Framework of Reference language levels and corresponding Cambridge English examinations. The practical part analyses the results of a questionnaire survey and evaluates the hypotheses stated.

Keywords:

Cambridge Assessment, Common European Framework of Reference, language certificates, language skills assessment, employability

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Mgr. Marcela Krumpolcová for the continuous support, guidance and patience during the process of writing my thesis and conducting the research.

I am also grateful to all companies who participated in the research and were willing to find time to answer my questionnaire and therefore provide me with worthy data to develop my thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, friends and the University for supporting me and encouraging me during all years of my studies.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with Cambridge English exams and their role in the recruitment process in the Zlín region. It describes different levels of the examinations and discussed their relation to the Common European Framework of Reference. Moreover, it researches their potential advantage in the recruitment and hiring process in companies of the Zlín region. As there are many students passing a language certificate during or after their studies who intend to find employment within the Zlín region, the results of the research might bring useful information not only to them but also to the employers themselves. The aim of the thesis is to investigate whether passing one of the Cambridge English certificates might put a candidate in a preferable position when searching employment and to determine which CEFR level is of the biggest interest to employers in the Zlín region when hiring employees.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part and the analysis. The theoretical part then includes two main sections. The first section deals with the Cambridge Assessment and provides general information about the organisation including its heritage and the approach which the organisation has towards language learning and teaching. It also gives information about the Cambridge English Assessment focusing on the division, content and assessment of their examinations. The second section then focuses on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Firstly, it again provides general information about the document as well as its history. Secondly, the section describes individual CEFR levels focusing on the language skills of candidates at each level. What is more, it lists a General Cambridge English as well as Business Cambridge English exam corresponding to each of the levels mainly dealing with its content.

The analysis is based on a questionnaire constructed of twelve mostly closed questions focusing on the opinion of employers on language certificates. These twenty employers represent the companies chosen under three conditions which are also listed in the work. Firstly, the analysis describes the goals of the research, the methodology and the description of the respondents. Moreover, it lists three hypotheses stated for the purposes of the research. Secondly, the analytical part provides all survey results presented in graphs supported by a description. All acquired data are then discussed with the stated hypotheses and. Finally, a conclusion is made to summarize the results of the survey.

I. THEORY

1 CAMBRIDGE ASSESSEMENT

1.1 General information

Cambridge Assessment is an international exam group and department as well as non-profit organisation of the University of Cambridge. (Hellenic American Union 2018) Set up over 150 years ago as an integral part of worldwide education and training they cover the whole spectrum from teacher training, general qualifications to curriculum development. Having a leading role in developing and providing educational assessment in more than 160 countries around the world they aim to promote excellence in education. Cambridge Assessment qualifications are recognised by educational institutions and employers across the whole world. (Cambridge Assessment n.d., 3) The group manages three exam boards including Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) and Cambridge Assessment English. (Cambridge Assessment 2018)

1.1.1 Heritage

Cambridge Assessment was founded by the University of Cambridge in 1858 as the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) – which is now a non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge (Cambridge Assessment 2018) – to conduct examinations for students other than the ones of the University of Cambridge. After nearly a decade they extended their programme to administer inspections to schools. In 1886 the organisation acquired its first building to perform their local lectures programme which included evening education for adults. With the increasing success came more levels of examination. After the Higher Local Examination initially introduced for women aiming to become teachers the company announced the Certificate of Proficiency in English (now part of the ESOL) in 1913 followed by the lower Certificate in English twenty-one years later. The number of different levels and types of examinations was increasing over the twentieth century and the success of the organisation was confirmed by the Queen's Award for Export achievement in 1992. In 2008, at its 150th anniversary, the organisation marked 8 million examinations across 150 countries all around the world. (Cambridge Assessment 2018)

1.1.2 The Cambridge Approach

The Cambridge Approach is a code of best practice principles developed by Cambridge Assessment and it is the first code of this kind to be established by an exam group. It was developed to achieve educational integrity and maintain the value of tests and qualifications

by accurately reflecting individual's knowledge (Cambridge Assessment n.d., 7) and to promote their mission of achieving excellence in education with the use of assessment. (Cambridge Assessment 2009, 3) Its principles fulfilled the need for a manual for individual assessment by providing detailed criteria and requirements related to specific tests and examinations explaining their purposes, models of measurement, assessment and operation. (Cambridge Assessment n.d., 7) The manual also guarantees all their assessments to be fair, to be executed under ethical principles and to be operated according to the highest technical standards. (Cambridge Assessment 2009, 3)

1.2 Cambridge English Assessment

1.2.1 General information

As mentioned above, Cambridge English Assessment is one of the three boards managed by the Cambridge Assessment. This board offers ESL (English as a second language) examinations. (Cambridge Assessment 2018) Cambridge English Qualifications are thorough exams across different levels, each of them focusing on one of the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The exams cover all key parts in language learning and testing – speaking, writing, reading and listening. (Cambridge English 2017) If the learner successfully passes all four parts of the exam he is provided with an internationally accepted certificate confirming their knowledge of the English language at a certain level. These certificated are a mark of excellence trusted by thousands of organisations and recognised by educational institutions and private as well as public employers all over the world. (Cambridge English 2017) The Association of Language Schools of the Czech Republic (2017) claims that more than 5 million people take these exams every year in over 130 countries. Other language exams can also be provided by the British Council, who is an international organisation providing educational opportunities and language materials to learners and teacher in more than 100 countries all over the world. (British Council 2017)

According to Chalhoub-Deville and Turner (2000, 529) what makes the Cambridge certificate exams most distinctive from other examinations is their connection to the context of education as their traditions originates in the context of school examinations. Since the exam board is a part of the University of Cambridge, they have always intended to have education and teaching as a visible feature of their exams. This connection between testing

and learning/teaching is also reflected in the test construction as the tests are developed to an extent by applied linguists as well as ESL teachers with years of teaching experience.

1.2.2 Division of Cambridge exams

The Cambridge General and higher education exams are divided into five different levels each corresponding to one of the levels of the CEFR. They are designed to build on the learner's skills from the previous level. They include the Key qualification (KET), the Preliminary qualification (PET), First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) and Certificate in Proficiency in English (CPE). (Cambridge English 2017)

Apart from these general English exams, the Cambridge Assessment also provides testing for learners working in a business environment. These tests are designed to help students develop language and communicative skills to practice in their professional environment. Passing one the three levels of Business Cambridge English Qualifications is a prove to employers that a candidate is confident to use their language skills to succeed in an international workplace. These three exams include Business Preliminary, Business Vantage and Business Higher, each of them again corresponding with a different CEFR level. (Cambridge English 2017)

1.2.3 Content of Cambridge exams

All five levels consist of obligatory parts called papers. (Chalhoub-Deville and Turner 2000, 526) The two lowest levels include tasks of reading, writing, listening and speaking and last about 2-3 hours. (Cambridge English 2017) In addition, the rest of the exams also include a paper called Use of English. The length of the three upper levels also varies but they take 5-6 hours. Apart from Listening and Speaking, which are executed together on a separate day, all parts are administered in one day. (Chalhoub-Deville and Turner 2000, 527)

Each of the papers consists of a variety of different tasks, each of them regarding both type of input and type of response. This method minimizes the advantage of performing one task which a test-taker may have over another. On the other hand, this method could also decrease the reliability across the tasks. Therefore, the board also makes test available for practice and provides materials for preparation. (Chalhoub-Deville and Turner 2000, 527)

As far the FCE, CAE and CPE exams are concerned, the Listening paper consists of three tasks. The first two include a multiple-choice format while the third task is a sentence completion. The texts are always played twice and represent a variety of accents which is typical for Cambridge exams as these two features are not always present in other examinations. The Reading paper is different across the three levels. The texts are obtained

from various sources including books, magazines, newspapers etc., their length ranges from 350 to 1200 words and make the test-taker interact in different ways from recognizing an attitude to focusing on details. The Use of English paper also differs across the three levels. It aims to examine the test-taker's knowledge of the formal side of the language system and its format includes multiple-choice, error correction, word formation etc. The writing part includes two parts, one of them being compulsory and the second one letting the test-taker choosing one of four options such as an article, a report etc. And lastly, the Speaking paper is administered with a pair of test-takers and two examiners. The test-takers are each asked to speak separately as well as perform various interactions with each other. (Chalhoub-Deville and Turner 2000, 527 – 8)

1.2.4 Assessment and grading of Cambridge exams

It is not necessary to pass all papers to pass the whole exam. The test is assessed as a whole and it is possible for candidates to pass even in case they fail to succeed in one of the papers but proved sufficient skills in others. (University of Cambridge, 2016) The results are then sent to an exam centre in about seven to nine weeks if the candidate takes a paper-based test and five to six weeks after a computer-based test. In all cases candidates receive an online Statement of Results and if the candidate successfully passed the test, the exam centre then has the certificate ready in about three weeks after receiving the results. (Cambridge English 2017) The Statement of Results and the certificate both contain the score for each of the papers qualified as exceptional, good, borderline or weak; score and grade for the overall exam and the corresponding CEFR level. Also, it is possible for a candidate to receive a certificate with the CEFR level higher than the one he originally applied for if his score corresponds to grade A. The following table show the CEFR levels a candidate could receive if the exam is targeted at level C1.

Table 1. Assessment of Cambridge exams

Grade	Score (/100)	CEFR level
A	80–100	C2
B	75–79	C1
C	60–74	C1
CEFR Level B2	45–59	B2

Source: Cambridge English 2017

The following figure shows the Cambridge English Scale and the relation between the CEFR levels, the Cambridge English Scale Score and final grade.

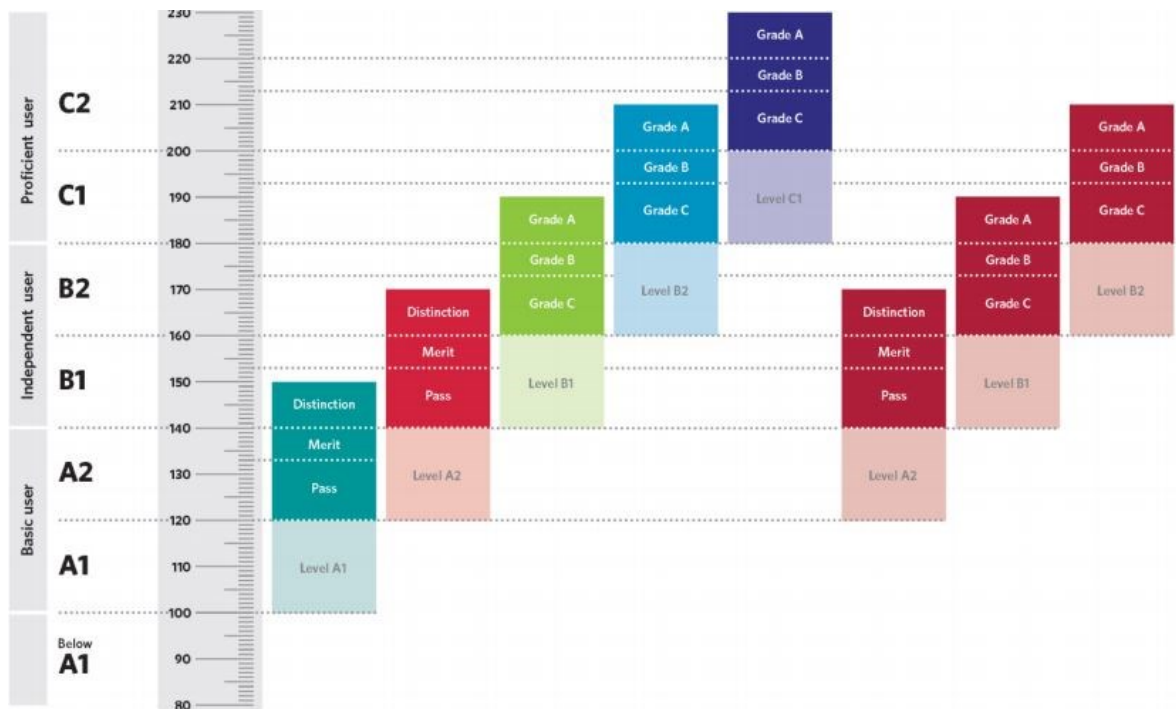


Figure 1. Cambridge English Scale

Source: Cambridge English 2015

Each of the papers is then marked according to the assessment scales which are again developed with the reference to the CEFR and their criteria vary according to the specific paper. These scales are valid for both Cambridge English General and Business English tests across all levels and each of them is marked from 0 to 5. (University of Cambridge, 2016)

The scales for the Writing tasks consist of four subscales which include Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language. The content criteria subscale focuses on how well the candidate managed to do what he was asked to do in a particular task. The communicative achievement focuses on whether the candidate has used the appropriate register for a given text style. The fluency, logic and correct order, in other words how the text is put together, is considered by the organisation criteria. The language subscale then focuses on both chosen vocabulary and grammar in terms of accuracy and range. Apart from this scale criteria, also length of responses as well as varieties of English are taken into account when marking. For each task there is a guideline provided and responses should not provide irrelevant content or lack some required information. Candidates are also expected

to be consistent in the variety of English they use for spelling. (University of Cambridge, 2016)

In the Speaking part, although candidates take the exam in a pair, they are assessed according to their individual performance. The assessment process is executed by two examiners each of which has a different role. The interlocutor gives an overall mark from 0 to 5 for global achievement while the assessor evaluates the oral examination according to four criteria which include Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. (University of Cambridge, 2016)

Fulcher and Davidson (2007, 160) also cover the issue of validity of assessments in his publication *Language Testing and Assessment*. He points out that examinations bodies can never state with a full certainty that a text is valid for particular purpose. Instead, their claim needs to be modified to the evidence and arguments insinuate that their claims about the interpretation and scoring is valid.

2 COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

2.1 General information

The Common European Framework of Reference is a complex document comprehensively describing the language knowledge which learners need to have in order to use a language for communication and what skills they need to develop to communicate and act effectively. In other words, it defines levels of proficiency which are used to measure these language skills and progress across all learning stages. (Council of Europe 2001, 1) As stated in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2018, 25-6) published in 2018 one of the main principles of the CEFR is “the promotion of the positive formulation of educational aims and outcomes at all levels”. These formulations defined by “can do” statements offer a clear and mutual base for learning which is more effective than deficiency descriptors. Nort, Ortega and Sheenan (2010, 6) define this as the very feature which makes the CEFR different from other language frameworks. They support their argument by claiming that these descriptors are scientifically validated and they complement the highlighted intercultural and linguistic competences of a language user.

The cultural context is also taken into consideration (Council of Europe 2001, 1) as the general aim of the Council of Europe was to gain greater unity and cooperation among language learners and educational institutions in different countries and to co-ordinate teaching and learning efforts by assisting learners as well as teachers, course designers and examiners. (Council of Europe 2018, 25)

The document helps overcome the barriers in communication in the field of language learning originating from the differences in European educational systems. By providing these common definitions it also encourages the courses and qualifications to be more transparent and promotes international cooperation among professionals working in this field. Moreover, it advances the recognition of internationally and supports European mobility. (University of Cambridge 2011, 5) However, according to the authors Byram and Parmenter (2012, 1) despite its great contribution to the language assessment system there were also some respondents with an opinion quite opposite even eleven years after the publication of the document. The opinions expressed that the impact of the framework was not of such broad reach so far. Although they agreed with its contribution the general transparency the point out that it does not play a big role in teaching at the school level.

2.2 History

The first framework presenting a similar concept to what the document is now was an attempt by David Wilkins who presented his ideas of level A1-C2 at the Ludwigshafen symposium in 1977. He aimed to make a unit with reference to certain levels. (Martyniuk 2010, 4)

The development of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment took place between 1993 and 1996 and it was developed by the Council of Europe. Their international working party of the Council of Europe followed recommendations provided by an intergovernmental conference called Transparency and Coherence in Language Learning in Europe which was held in Rüsclikon, a city near Zurich, Switzerland in November of 1991. The aim in developing the CEFR was to present common reference points which were eventually introduced in the form of common reference levels. These reference points aimed to help find relation between each of the courses and examinations and eventually achieve transparency and coherence as was discussed at the Rüsclikon symposium. (Martyniuk 2010, 3)

The CEFR was finally published in 2001 after piloting from 1997-200. The first publications were in English and French but it has translated into 40 languages. According to North, Ortega and Sheenan (2010, 7) it is nowadays accepted as “the international standard for language teaching and learning” and many European countries have adopted it.

2.3 Levels of the Common European Framework of Reference

The CFR describes a framework of six broad levels which seem to be an adequate number for the organisation of language learning and is supported by a wide range of researches. The six level of proficiency are then covered by three basic divisions according to different language skills that a learner might have. The three basic branches marked as A, B and C define a Basic User as A, an Independent User as B and a Proficient User as C. Each of them is then divided into two more levels: Breakthrough as A1, Waystage as A2, Treshold as B1, Vantage as B2, Effective Operational Proficiency as C1 and Mastery as C2

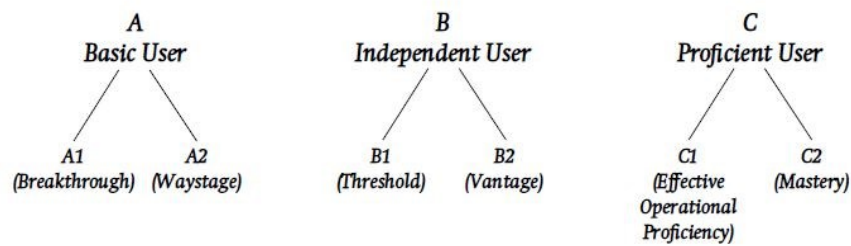


Figure 2. Division of the CEFR levels

Source: Council of Europe 2001

2.3.1 Breakthrough: A1

Level A1 is the lowest level of the framework and is the first level of the Basic user proficiency. At this point the learners are only able to interact in a simple way, give basic information about themselves and introduce themselves as well as ask for basic information about others. This information might include facts about where they live, about their friends, things they have or their interests. As far as written language is concerned, they can write a simple postcard or fill in simple forms providing personal details about themselves. They can also read and recognize familiar words on notices or posters. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 29-30) The Council of Europe (2001, 24) defines learners at this level as able to understand simple conversations based on everyday expressions mostly aimed at satisfaction of different needs. They are most confident when the other person talks slowly and clearly is willing to help.

2.3.2 Waystage: A2

According to the Council of Europe (2001, 24) learners at the A2 level can still communicate in a simple manner but the spectrum of their understanding has broadened and now also includes frequently use expressions related to everyday topics like shopping or employment. They can exchange information with other speakers and communicate in routine tasks. Moreover, not only they are able to give information about themselves but also about other people using personal pronouns.

Learners feel like they can handle short conversations although their language skills are not sufficient enough to keep the flow of the conversation by themselves. In these conversations they now use a series of routine phrases and expressions. This level seems to have the most descriptors stating social functions like greeting people, ask and react to how they are or respond to invitations. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 29-30)

The A2 level has a stronger level of performance marked as A2+ where the student plays a more active role in a conversation. Learners handle A2 skills with more confidence and their ability to sustain a monologue or a conversation is more significant. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 28)

2.3.2.1 Cambridge English: Key

The Key English Test (abbreviated as KET) is a test corresponding with the A2 CEFR level, it is the first level of General and higher education Cambridge exams and as all of these tests it can also be taken as a paper-based or as a computer-based test. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) It proves that a candidate is able to use English in everyday situations (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) and has a good foundation of the language. Moreover, it can give learners confidence to study further in order to pass one of the higher exams. At this level, the learner should be able to understand basic spoken phrases and expressions as well as simple written language and should be able to interact with an English speaker at a basic level. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3)

The abilities that a candidate should be able to have at this level have been researched and described by The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) using examples taken from everyday life. Since Cambridge English Language Assessment is one of the founding members of the association it also uses this framework of examples to ensure their exams are an accurate reflection of real-life skills. The table below shows the areas of everyday life which a learner encounters at this level. Each area then describes the abilities a learner should have within the Reading and Writing as well as Listening and Speaking papers. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3)

Typical abilities	Reading and Writing	Listening and Speaking			
Overall general ability	CAN understand straightforward information within a known area. CAN complete forms and write short, simple letters or postcards related to personal information.	CAN understand simple questions and instructions. CAN express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.	Work	CAN understand most short reports or manuals of a predictable nature within his/her own area of expertise. CAN write a short, comprehensible note of request to a colleague or a known contact in another company.	CAN understand the general meaning of a presentation made at a conference if the language is simple and backed up by visuals or video. CAN state simple requirements within own job area.
Social & Tourist	CAN understand straightforward information on food, standard menus, road signs and messages on automatic cash machines. CAN complete most forms related to personal information.	CAN understand straightforward directions, provided that these are not lengthy or complex. CAN express likes and dislikes in familiar contexts using simple language.	Study	CAN understand the general meaning of a simplified textbook or article, reading very slowly. CAN write a very short, simple narrative or description.	CAN understand basic instructions on class time, dates and room numbers. CAN express simple opinions using expressions such as 'I don't agree'.

Figure 3. Language skills of a KEY candidate

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

The exam consists of four tasks divided into three papers in total. Listening and Writing have been combined to make up one individual paper while the Listening and Speaking papers remained separate. The format of the whole exam is listed in the table below.

Table 2. Composition of KEY exam

<i>PAPER</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>CONTENT</i>	<i>MARKS (% of total)</i>
Paper 1: Reading and Writing	1 hour 10 minutes	9 parts/56 questions	50%
Paper 2: Listening	30 minutes including 8 minutes' transfer time	5 parts/25 questions	25 %
Paper 3: Speaking	8-10 minutes per pair of candidates	2 parts	25%

Data from: Cambridge English 2017

As the figure shows, the time allowed for completion of the Reading and Writing paper is one hour and ten minutes. It consists of nine parts which make up a total of 56 questions. The response format varies across tasks but includes matching, multiple choice, right/wrong/doesn't say, multiple-choice cloze, word completion, open cloze, information transfer and guided writing. (Cambridge English 2017) The texts might include notices and signs, newspapers and magazines, notes, emails, postcards etc. (University of Cambridge 2016, 8) The listening tasks last for 30 minutes. This time frame also includes eight minutes

for the test-takers to transfer their answers onto the answer sheet. This paper consists of 5 parts which include 25 questions. The task types include multiple choice, matching and a gap-fill. (Cambridge English 2017) The recordings are played twice, contain a range of standard accents of native-speakers and reflect a variety of situations which candidates are expected to deal with at A2 level represented by dialogues as well as monologues. (University of Cambridge 2016, 30-2) This paper makes 25% of the final mark. And lastly, the Speaking paper takes eight to ten minutes for each pair of candidates as this paper is administered by two candidates who make up a pair. It consists of two parts including an interview and a collaborative task. The interview is focused on an individual speaking and interacting with the examiner while in the second part the test-taker is asked to talk with the other candidate. This part also represents 25% of the final mark. (Cambridge English 2017) The speakers should be able to have sufficient control over grammatical forms and use appropriate vocabulary when talking about a particular situation. (University of Cambridge 2016, 54) An example of the test level is illustrated on the figure below. It is a part 4 of the Reading and Writing paper and a sample of the answer format. (University of Cambridge 2016, 22)


Part 4

Questions 21 – 27

Read the article about a sailing trip.
 Are sentences **21 – 27** 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B)?
 If there is not enough information to answer 'Right' (A) or 'Wrong' (B), choose 'Doesn't say' (C).

For questions **21 – 27**, mark **A, B or C** on your answer sheet.

Round the World



Jonathan and Claire Spencer both had very busy jobs and didn't have enough time to spend with their young children. They wanted to change this and, because their hobby was boats, they decided to sail round the world together.

It took six years to prepare everything for the trip. First, they bought a new boat. Then, both adults had to take advanced sailing lessons and learn all about the sea and the weather. Jonathan also did several courses in repairing engines and Claire spent an hour in a restaurant learning to cut up fish.

In October, they took a one-year break from their jobs and sailed away from England with their two children. The next year, in August, their long journey ended in Australia.

The boat was quite small, but Jonathan and Claire took a teacher for the children with them. None of them found the trip boring because there were three computers, many CDs, a television and a DVD player on the boat.

The family loved being at sea and seeing the stars in the sky. But, most of all, Jonathan and Claire enjoyed spending time with their children while they were still young.

21 The Spencers were soon ready to travel round the world.
A Right **B** Wrong **C** Doesn't say

22 Jonathan learnt to do the work of a mechanic.
A Right **B** Wrong **C** Doesn't say

23 Claire knew a lot about cooking before the trip started.
A Right **B** Wrong **C** Doesn't say

24 The trip took longer than twelve months.
A Right **B** Wrong **C** Doesn't say

Figure 4. Example of KEY task

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

2.3.3 Threshold: B1

The first level where students are classified as Independent Users represent a performance bearing two main features. Learners are finally able to fully sustain their conversation and understand what they are asked to without any big difficulties like follow main points of a longer discussion, even of those concerning other people. Their speech is clear with articulated pronunciation with a standard accent. There are evident pauses for corrections and planning of grammar and vocabulary but the overall monologue is comprehensive. Secondly, speakers manage their everyday life situations with flexibility and are able to cope with problems in public transportation, making arrangements or engaging in an unprepared conversation about familiar topics. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 28)

Learners even feel confident in understanding main points when watching TV listening to the radio programmes on current affairs as long as they are delivered slowly and clearly. They also confirm sufficient skills to write more connected texts on topics of their interest or personal letters where they describe experiences. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 30-2)

The B1+ level again keeps the two main features described above while representing the B1 level strongly. These features are now enriched of the amount of information provided. Students are likely to relatively describe symptoms to a doctor, summarise and give their opinions on short texts like interview or short stories, check and confirm information etc. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 28)

2.3.3.1 *Cambridge English: PET*

The Preliminary test (abbreviated as PET) is a second level Cambridge General and higher exams test and is the equivalent of the CEFR level B1 and can also be taken as a paper-base or as a computer-based test. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) Similarly to KET, also for this exam the candidates show they have practical skills for everyday situations. The qualification then shows that the candidate has mastered the basics of English and his language skills are now at an intermediate level. The exam proves that the learner understands simple textbooks and articles in the English language, is able to write letter and emails about everyday subjects, is able to comprehend factual information and is able to differentiate opinions and mood in spoken as well as written English. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3)

The table below shows the ALTE skills framework a candidate must show he has abilities of at the B1 level. Again, they include areas of everyday life such as social abilities or work and study-related communication skills. (University of Cambridge 2016, 4)

Typical abilities	Reading and Writing	Listening and Speaking		
Overall general ability	CAN understand routine information and articles.	CAN understand straightforward instructions or public announcements.	Work	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and theoretical articles within own work area.
	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.	CAN express simple opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way.		CAN make reasonably accurate notes at a meeting or seminar where the subject matter is familiar and predictable.
Social & Tourist	CAN understand factual articles in newspapers, routine letters from hotels and letters expressing personal opinions.	CAN identify the main topic of a news broadcast on TV if there is a strong visual element.	Study	CAN understand most information of a factual nature in his/her study area.
	CAN write letters on a limited range of predictable topics related to personal experience.	CAN ask for information about accommodation and travel.		CAN take basic notes in a lecture.
				CAN follow a simple presentation/demonstration.
				CAN offer advice to clients within own job area on simple matters.
				CAN understand instructions on classes and assignments given by a teacher or lecturer.
				CAN take part in a seminar or tutorial using simple language.

Figure 5. Language skills of a PET candidate

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

The format of the exam is not too different from the previous level test. It also consists of four tasks which are then executed in three papers including the Reading and Writing paper, the Listening paper and the Speaking paper. The whole composition of the exam is illustrated in the following table. (Cambridge English 2017)

Table 3. Composition of PET exam

<i>PAPER</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>CONTENT</i>	<i>MARKS (% of total)</i>
Paper 1: Reading and Writing	1 hour 30 minutes	8 parts/42 questions	50%
Paper 2: Listening	36 minutes including 6 minutes' transfer time	4 parts/25 questions	25 %
Paper 3: Speaking	10 – 12 minutes per pair of candidates	4 parts	25%

Data from: Cambridge English 2017

The total amount of time for Paper 1 is 1 hour and 30 minutes. Both tasks of the paper include eight parts made up of 42 questions. Particularly speaking, it is five parts consisting of 35 questions for reading and three parts consisting of seven questions for the writing part. The test-taker must go through a variety multiple choice, matching, true/false and multiple-choice cloze exercises in the reading part (Cambridge English 2017) and manage writing a short message to communicate an information and writing a story or an informal letter in the second part. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) This Paper is again 50% of the final mark. The listening part is about 30 minutes long and includes a six-minute answer transfer time. In the four parts of this paper the test-taker listens to a range of monologues and dialogues reflecting everyday situations while answering multiple-choice, gap-fill and true/false questions. This paper is 25% percent of the final mark. The speaking paper is extended for two more parts and there is also more time allowed at this level. The learner is again paired with another candidate and is asked to interact with the examiner as well as the other candidate, make suggestions, negotiate, discuss alternatives, describe photographs or express opinions. (Cambridge English 2017) The figure below shows the difficulty of the B1 level represented by Part 1 of Writing.

1	I asked my new neighbours where they had lived before. I asked my new neighbours, 'Where didbefore?
2	They said their old house was quite near London. They said their old house wasn't very London.
3	This house is larger than their old house. Their old house wasn't as this house.

Figure 6. Example of PET task

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

2.3.3.2 Cambridge English: Business Preliminary

Business Preliminary exam is a test corresponding to the B1 level of the CEFR. As all General and higher education as well as Business Cambridge Qualifications, candidates may choose to take the exam on a computer or as a paper-based test. This specific level proves

that a candidate has developed sufficient communication language skill to speak with native speakers for everyday business and workplace purposes. Since Business Preliminary is the lowest level of the Business exams, candidates are able to write short emails using appropriate language, follow short telephone conversations, interpret charts and discuss business-related matters. Overall, these skills are reflecting the skills which General and higher education test-takers have at this level. However, their testing is focused more on orientation in the business environment rather than everyday situations outside of the workplace. (University of Cambridge 2016, 7)

The structure of these Business Qualifications remains the same. All three papers are present with only minor changes in the number of parts and tasks. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3)

2.3.4 Vantage: B2

The B2 level speakers elevate their understanding of text and they now follow concrete as well as abstract topics which might include a professional discussion in their field of specialisation. Their level of fluency is higher when keeping an average interaction with a native speaker without excessive efforts from both sides. The speakers move from describing their dreams and ambitions to analysing advantages and disadvantages and their viewpoint on range of subjects (Council of Europe 2001, 24)

According to the European Centre for Modern Languages (2011, 28) there is the biggest break in terms of effective argumentation. This skill is represented by the ability to account for and keep their arguments with the support of relevant arguments, confront a viewpoint of another person, evaluate proposals etc. Also, students are now able to keep their role in a social discourse, initiate it and interact spontaneously.

The stronger B2 performance marked as B2+ level shows that these two new skills of effective argumentation and social discourse awareness are the result of good conversational management or co-operating strategies which also reflects in the coherence and cohesion of the way students express themselves. They use a range of linking words and highlight the main points of their speech. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 28)

2.3.4.1 Cambridge English: FCE

The First Certificate in English (abbreviated as FCE) exam is an upper-intermediate level exam following PET. According to the Common European Framework of Reference this exam corresponds to the level B2 (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) whose speakers are defined as independent users. (Council of Europe, 24) The candidates on this level are

not only able to use English in everyday situations but also for work and study purposes. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) Candidates who pass the FCE exam can start using the language in an English-speaking work environment or study foundation or pathway course (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) to further improve their skills and gain confidence to apply for further studies. (British Council 2018) Moreover, candidates have enough language skills to live in an English-speaking country independently. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) More detailed description about the skills that candidates have is provided in the figure below.

Typical abilities	Reading and Writing	Listening and Speaking
Overall general ability	CAN scan texts for relevant information. CAN make notes while someone is talking, or write a letter including non-standard requests.	CAN follow a talk on a familiar topic. CAN keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.
Social & Tourist	CAN read the media for information quickly and with good understanding. CAN express opinions and give reasons.	CAN ask for clarification and further information, and is likely to understand the answer. CAN keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.
Work	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and understand most of the content. CAN write a simple report of a factual nature and begin to evaluate, advise, etc.	CAN ask for factual information and understand the answer. CAN express own opinion, and express arguments to a limited extent.
Study	CAN make simple notes that are of reasonable use for essay or revision purposes, capturing the most important points. CAN present arguments, using a limited range of expression (vocabulary, grammatical structures).	CAN answer predictable or factual questions. CAN check that all instructions are understood.

Figure 7. Language skills of an FCE candidate

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

The FCE exam consists of four papers combining five tasks and it is the first of the exams which separates the reading and writing parts. Instead, the Reading part is combined with a task of Use of English to make up Paper 1. This paper is then followed by papers of

Writing, Listening and Speaking. (Cambridge English 2017) The table below shows the whole composition of the exam.

Table 4. Composition of FCE exam

<i>PAPER</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>CONTENT</i>	<i>MARKS (% of total)</i>
Paper 1: Reading and Use of English	1 hour 15minutes	7 parts/52 questions	Each task 20%
Paper 2: Writing	1 hour 20 minutes	2 parts	20%
Paper 3: Listening	40 minutes	4 parts/30 questions	20%
Paper 4: Speaking	14 minutes per a pair of candidates	4 parts	20%

Data from: Cambridge English 2017 and University of Cambridge 2016

As mentioned above, the Paper 1 now consists of the task of Reading and Use of English, which is the lowest level that includes this grammar-testing part. It tests how well a candidate can use a range of vocabulary and grammar by completing four exercises focusing on complementation, idioms, collocations, grammar etc. (University of Cambridge 2016, 7) The response formats range from multiple-choice, open cloze, word formation and key word transformation (Cambridge English 2017) where a candidate is asked to rewrite sentences differently to show his understanding of the sentence. In this exam, the percentage of the final mark is the same for all four parts plus the Use of English. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2-3) The rest of the Papers also vary in the time allowed for their completion, number of parts and response formats but the overall structure remains the same as in the previous exams. The last part of the Use of English is demonstrated in the following figure.

25	Joan was in favour of visiting the museum.
	IDEA
	Joan thought it would be to the museum.
26	Arthur has the talent to become a concert pianist.
	THAT
	Arthur is so could become a concert pianist.
27	'Do you know when the match starts, Sally?' asked Mary.
	IF
	Mary asked Sally time the match started.

Figure 8. Example of FCE task

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

2.3.4.2 Cambridge English: Business Vantage

The CEFR B2 level is also the level of difficulty of the Business Vantage qualification. It is the following exam to the Business Preliminary test which makes it the second level of difficulty out of all three Business Cambridge exams. Passing this exam might help candidates who are already working in an international environment when applying for a new job, getting promotion or to further develop their career. (Cambridge English, Exam) The skills candidates have are comparable to the previous level of the Business examinations, however they are elevated to more advanced level. The candidates move from writing short emails to writing proposals or reports. They can read business publications and understand as well as contribute to discussions and meetings. (University of Cambridge 2016)

As far as the structure is concerned, there are some changes in comparison to the general English tests. As the role of Use of English is not very significant in the Business examinations, the papers are only divided into Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. However, the Reading does content two shorter Use of English texts. The test-takers are given a shorter amount of time for the completion of the first two papers while the second half of the test remains the same. (University of Cambridge 2016)

2.3.5 Effective Operational Proficiency: C1

Speakers passing at a C1 level are classified as proficient users and they are one level before reaching the highest level of proficiency. They understand a broad range of expressions and vocabulary, considerably longer and more demanding texts and they use their language skills flexibly for in social, academic as well as professional environment. Their form clearly structured sentences to produce detailed texts on various complex matters. (Council of Europe 2001, 24) The C1 level allows fluent and spontaneous and nearly effortless communication as the speaker shows very little signs of having to search for expressions. The speakers themselves notice they can understand television and radio programmes without any problems. They are also able to read specialised articles and follow instructions with no connection to their professional field (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 27-30)

2.3.5.1 Cambridge English: CAE

The Certificate in Advanced English (abbreviated as CAE) is an exam corresponding to level CEFR C1 level (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) which is considered as the first level of a proficiency use of English (Council of Europe 2001, 24). It indicates that a candidate has achieved a high level of skills in English. Candidates who pass this exam prove they have developed the best skills to put to use when studying, working and living in an English-speaking environment. (University of Cambridge 2016, 2) As far as its difficulty is concerned, it is the fourth Cambridge General and higher education qualification test. (Cambridge English 2017) Passing the CAE exam is a valid proof that a candidate can follow a university level academic course and can communicate and manage at a professional level where he can fully and actively participate in meetings or seminars, carry out a complex and challenging research and stands out and differentiates himself. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) The figure below lists all the corresponding skills according to the ALTE.

Typical abilities	Reading and Writing	Listening and Speaking	Work		
Overall general ability	CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, and CAN take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write a piece of work which shows an ability to communicate.	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	Work	CAN understand the general meaning of more complex articles without serious misunderstanding. CAN, given enough time, write a report that communicates the desired message.	CAN follow discussion and argument with only occasional need for clarification, employing good compensation strategies to overcome inadequacies. CAN deal with unpredictable questions.
Social & Tourist	CAN understand complex opinions/arguments as expressed in serious newspapers. CAN write most letters they are likely to be asked to do; such errors as occur will not prevent understanding of the message.	CAN pick up nuances of meaning/opinion. CAN keep up conversations of a casual nature for an extended period of time and discuss abstract/cultural topics with a good degree of fluency and range of expression.	Study	CAN scan texts for relevant information, and grasp main topic of text. CAN write a piece of work whose message can be followed throughout.	CAN follow up questions by probing for more detail. CAN make critical remarks/express disagreement without causing offence.

Figure 9. Language skills of a CAE candidate

Source: University of Cambridge 2017

The exam is divided into the same parts as the FCE test – Reading and Use of English again combined into one, Writing, Listening and Speaking, each of them again consisting of several parts and being of different length. The full description of all parts is provided in the table below. (Cambridge English 2017)

Table 5. Composition of CAE exam

<i>PAPER</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>CONTENT</i>	<i>MARKS (% of total)</i>
Paper 1: Reading and Use of English	1 hour 30 minutes	8 parts/56 questions	Each task 20%
Paper 2: Writing	1 hour 30 minutes	2 parts	20%
Paper 3: Listening	40 minutes	4 parts/30 questions	20%
Paper 4: Speaking	15 minutes per a pair of candidates	4 parts	20%

Data from: Cambridge English 2017

The Reading and Use of English paper is again longer than the previous exams’ but as far as its structure is concerned, the number as well as answer format of Use of English parts and questions remained the same. The reading exercises are focused on understanding of opinion and attitude of a text, comparing skills, cohesion and coherence, specific information, tone of the text etc. These skills are assessed from multiple-choice exercises,

cross-text multiple matching, gapped texts and multiple matching exercises which correspond with the advanced level on the exam. (University of Cambridge 2016, 7) In the writing part the candidates create two different texts which may include an essay, letter, email, proposal, report or a review. (Cambridge English 2017) The first task is compulsory while the second one is a format of choice. (University of Cambridge 2017, 29) The listening texts include texts such radio broadcasts, speeches, lectures, interviews or discussions and they are of both monologue and interacting characters. The answers repeat the common formats used through all exams. (University of Cambridge 2017, 54) Lastly, in the first part of Speaking, the candidates are asked answer the examiner's separately. This part is followed by a conversation where each candidate first speaks for one minute. (Cambridge English 2017). The weighting is equal for all parts. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) The level of difficulty of the exam is illustrated on the figure below showing Part 3 of Paper 1 which is the Use of English.

Training sports champions	
What are the abilities that a (0) sports person needs? To	PROFESSION
guarantee that opponents can be (17) , speed, stamina and	COME
agility are essential, not to mention outstanding natural talent. Both a	
rigorous and comprehensive (18) regime and a highly nutritious	FIT
diet are vital for top-level performance. It is carbohydrates, rather than	
proteins and fat, that provide athletes with the (19) they need to	ENDURE
compete. This means that pasta is more (20) than eggs or	BENEFIT
meat. Such a diet enables them to move very energetically when	
required. Failure to follow a sensible diet can result in the (21)	ABLE
to maintain stamina.	

Figure 10. Example of CAE task

Source: University of Cambridge 2017

2.3.5.2 Cambridge English: Business Higher

The Cambridge English Business Higher is the last and thus most difficult level of all the Business qualifications. Similarly to the CAE exam, candidates passing this test prove to have language skills corresponding to the CEFR C1 level. Following Business Vantage, this is the highest level of professional language skills. Candidates are able to express themselves on an advanced level of fluency and they can fully participate in meeting and give

presentations. Moreover, they can communicate at managing positions at a professional level with confidence (University of Cambridge 2016) as they have the language skills to carry out effectively an extensive research and to react appropriately in different social and cultural situations in an international business environment. (University of Cambridge 2016)

The composition of the exam is changed in the same manner as the previous test. Again, the Use of English is reduced and became a part of the Reading paper now consisting of three parts. The remaining papers, Writing, Listening and Speaking, remain in the test. However, in general the overall number of tasks and parts decreased. (University of Cambridge 2016)

2.3.6 Mastery: C2

The last level of the CEFR manual, marked as C2, is also the second level where users are classified as proficient. The speakers express themselves appropriately, precisely and with significant ease. They also have a wide knowledge of idiomatic and colloquial expressions as well as good sense of connotative level of meaning which are features broadly found in the speech of native speakers. (European Centre for Modern Languages 2011, 27) Their highly elevated language skills include summarising information from both spoken and written sources, build arguments or spontaneous expression with awareness of even fine shades of meaning. (Council of Europe 2001, 24)

According to the European Centre for Modern Languages (2011, 27) it is important to note that this level of proficiency is not intended to be comparable with the competences and skills of a native speaker. Researches including a project which rates mother-tongue as well as foreign language competences using the CEFR descriptors show that the skills of ambilingual speakers reach well above the C2 level. Therefore, the seventh level of “ambilingual proficiency” was also proposed by Wilkins in 1978.

2.3.6.1 5. Cambridge English: CPE

The Certificate of Proficiency in English is the highest and most difficult level General and higher education exam of the Cambridge English Qualifications. (Cambridge English, 2017) According to the CEFR (2001, 24) it is the second level of a proficiency use of English following the CAE exam. Having skills on this extremely high level declares that a candidate is able to study demanding subjects and is perfect for learners who aim to apply for postgraduate and PhD programmes as they can actively engage in academic life and participate in tutorials and seminars with confidence as well as lead an execute complex and challenging research projects. Moreover, having skills at this level is a valid prove that a

candidate is able to work at managing positions in an English-speaking and international business environment as he is able to negotiate and persuade effectively. (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) All skills in various fields reflecting the extreme level of language knowledge at this level are listed in the following figure.

Examples of Can Do statements at Level C2				
Typical abilities	Reading and Writing	Listening and Speaking	Work	
Overall general ability	CAN understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts. CAN write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.	CAN advise on or talk about sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	CAN understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language. CAN make full and accurate notes and continue to participate in a meeting or seminar.	CAN advise on/handle complex, delicate or contentious issues, such as legal or financial matters, to the extent that he/she has the necessary specialist knowledge.
Study	CAN access all sources of information quickly and reliably. CAN make accurate and complete notes during the course of a lecture, seminar or tutorial.	CAN understand colloquial asides and cultural allusions.	Social & Tourist CAN (for example, when looking for accommodation) understand a tenancy agreement in detail, including its main implications. CAN write letters on any subject with good expression and accuracy.	CAN talk about complex or sensitive issues without awkwardness.

Figure 11. Language skills of a CPE candidate

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

The composition of the exam again remains the same. There are four parts to the CPE exam – Reading and Use of English again combined into one paper, Writing, Listening and Speaking. (Cambridge English 2017) The weighting of individual papers remains equal (University of Cambridge 2016, 3) as in the previous level while there is again a difference in lengths and number of tasks of some of the parts. (Cambridge English 2017) The overall composition is listed in the table below.

Table 6. Composition of CPE exam

PAPER	TIME	CONTENT	MARKS (% of total)
Paper 1: Reading and Use of English	1 hour 30 minutes	7 parts/53 questions	Each task 20%
Paper 2: Writing	1 hour 30 minutes	2 parts	20%
Paper 3: Listening	40 minutes	4 parts/30 questions	20%
Paper 4: Speaking	16 minutes per a pair of candidates	3 parts	20%

Data from: Cambridge English 2017

The length of Paper 1, Reading and Use of English remains the same while being composed of only 7 parts divided into 53 questions. Parts 1 to 4 contain texts testing grammar and vocabulary knowledge of a candidate while the rest of the tasks are focused on reading and comprehension tasks. Candidates have to deal with various response formats including multiple-choice cloze, open cloze, word formation, key transformation, gapped text etc. Even though they are very similar to the formats in the previous level, the difficulty of the tasks is elevated. This fact is reflected in the text types in the reading part which includes texts as difficult as fiction and non-fiction books or articles from magazines, newspapers or the internet. (University of Cambridge 2016, 7) The pattern of the writing part remains the same, although the extreme difficulty of the exam is very prominent as the choice of text types contain text on a very advanced level, even including well-known titles like *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The candidate is provided with two sets of two book and may choose the type of text he wants to write using his understanding of these books in Part 2. In the opposite case, the candidate can choose one of three other question providing a different type of text. On the other hand, in Part 1, the text as well as the genre of text is given and compulsory. (Cambridge English 2017) The listening part remains the same. It might also include some of the same parts as the CAE exam as well as the common answer formats. Lastly, Speaking only includes three parts of different lengths containing a short exchange with the examiner, a collaborative task where both candidates are asked to interact together and a 2-minute long turn (University of Cambridge 2016, 51) focused on expressing and justifying opinions followed by a short discussion. (Cambridge English 2017) The extreme difficulty of this exam can be seen in the following figure – Question 5(b) in the Part 2 of Writing. The student chose to write a report about of the book provided in the set.

'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep' by Philip K. Dick is a title of profound implications, able to sparkle the interest of the average reader.

The Plot

The story follows the life and experiences of Rick Deckard who works for the San Francisco Police Department on a journey of self-discovery through the landscapes of a post-apocalyptic Earth. A couple of decades ago there was a major nuclear catastrophe that has gradually reduced Earth to a pile of contaminated rubble. Most animal species are extinct and a vast percentage of the population has emigrated to the newly-colonized planet Mars. Those left behind have no choice but to continue their lives as best as possible enduring the radioactivity still eminent in the atmosphere. Emigrants to Mars are given specially-designed Androids which are human-like robots to aid them in the planet's hostile conditions. Deckard's official capacity is bounty hunter with the job of hunting down escaped Androids from Mars in order to 'retire' them before causing harm to humans.

Title meaning and importance

The title of the novel asks the rhetoric question of whether these outwardly human robots are capable of dreaming and having emotions in the form that their human masters are. This theme is developed as Deckard undergoes profound changes regarding his attitude towards Androids, ultimately abandoning his former cynical approach in favour of a more tolerating view of them. The distinction between human beings and Androids grows increasingly turbid and towards the end Deckard takes a compassionate view of the Androids in terms of their plight which is solely man's creation. It highlights that we may, in the not so distant future, manufacture robots that might be dangerously close to humans in their resemblance of them.

Title's application to the story

The title clearly reflects major premises of the story, such as the thin line between humans and their robotic creations. There are many surreal moments during which Androids even seem like human beings in their reactions but they cannot escape their fate and must succumb to the horrible facts of their existence. So the question in the title is arguably a concrete negative one, but is meant to be addressed in a philosophical way.

'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep' is very captivating at times and the reader can identify with the characters and their respective struggles. Its title carries with it a resonance able to draw the reader's attention.

Figure 12. Example of CPE task

Source: University of Cambridge 2016

II. ANALYSIS

3 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH

In the first part of the practical part of the thesis I will provide general information concerning my research. I will define the goals of the investigation, the form I chose to collect data and describe the respondents approached and the conditions according to which they were chosen. Lastly, I will state three hypothesis that will eventually be evaluated in the following chapter using the collected data.

3.1 Goals of the research

The main goal of the thesis research was to investigate the role of the Cambridge English certificates in the recruitment process of employees in the Zlín region. The aim of the research was to analyse whether passing one of the Cambridge English certificates is a potential advantage for a candidate applying for a post and if it puts him to a preferential position among all candidates. The second goal was to analyse which CEFR level is potentially attractive for employers and whether they prefer General English certificates or Business English certificates.

Apart from the recruitment process, the thesis also aims to research if employers encourage their employees to enrol in language courses and eventually pass one the examinations to obtain a language certificate and what conditions they provide if they do so. The research also aimed to investigate the character of the language skills which employers require from their employees. In other words, the importance of the correct pronunciation and accent in an employee's communication.

3.2 Methodology of the research

The thesis uses a questionnaire survey as its only method of collecting data. The questionnaire, created by the author of the thesis, is anonymous and was delivered to twenty respondents via email providing a HTML link to access the online questionnaire. It consists of a total of twelve questions with only one possible answer, eleven of which are closed and one of which is open leaving the respondent space to formulate the answer himself. The number of the responds options in the closed questions then ranges from three to seven keeping the questionnaire simple and focused on the main points. Two of the closed questions offered the respond of "Other" asking respondents to provide their own answer.

The responds are presented in manually created graphs providing the percentage for each respond option chosen by respondents. These graphs are further described and their

results are discussed with three hypotheses set before the beginning of the research followed by a summary and conclusion.

The advantage of this method is its power to collect a sufficient amount of responses in a short period of time. The author can also choose the response pattern which can be adapted for each question individually according to the character of the questions and the objective of the research. On the other hand, the conductor of the research is reliant on the truthfulness and veracity of the respondents and needs to take into account the diversity of the respondents which can lead to the results being less objective. For this particular research, the main disadvantage might lie in the differences in the of professional field the respondents come from.

3.3 Description of the respondents

Twenty companies were approached with the objective to gather adequate data. They were approached via email in all cases and they were provided a link to an online questionnaire. I mostly contacted the human resources department with a few exceptions in which the management of the company was contacted. Moreover, as the goal of the research was to analyse the role of the Cambridge English examinations in the field of employment exclusively in the Zlín region, the area of potential respondents was strictly limited to the Zlín region. Most of them residing in the regional capital of Zlín and the closest surrounding towns of Slušovice, Vizovice, Holešov, Uherské Hradiště or Otrokovice. This fact reflects one of the three conditions set up prior to approaching the respondents to support the objectivity of the survey.

Firstly, as mentioned above, all of them represented companies in private ownership which were established and currently have their headquarters in the Zlín region. The second condition concerns the number of their employees which in all cases exceeds one hundred. This number has been chosen with regard to the third condition which is directly connected with the goal of the survey. All chosen companies also export their products to foreign markets and international communication is a significant part of their spectrum.

As far as the professional field of the companies is concerned, there was no specific condition chosen in this matter. The fields included construction and building industry, food and food processing industry, furniture making or mechanical engineering and their main objective was production for some accompanied by providing corresponding services as well.

3.4 Hypotheses statements

The questions included in the survey which was made for the purposes of this investigation were composed with regard to the following hypotheses. These three hypotheses statements will consequently be evaluated with the use of the collected data.

- **Hypothesis 1**

Cambridge Certificates are not of big importance to employers in the recruitment process yet they do take notice of them.

- **Hypothesis 2**

Employers do not require that their employees pass one of the Cambridge English examinations during the employment.

- **Hypothesis 3**

The most important skill for employers is their employees' ability to communicate effectively in the English language and they do not require perfection in grammar or accent.

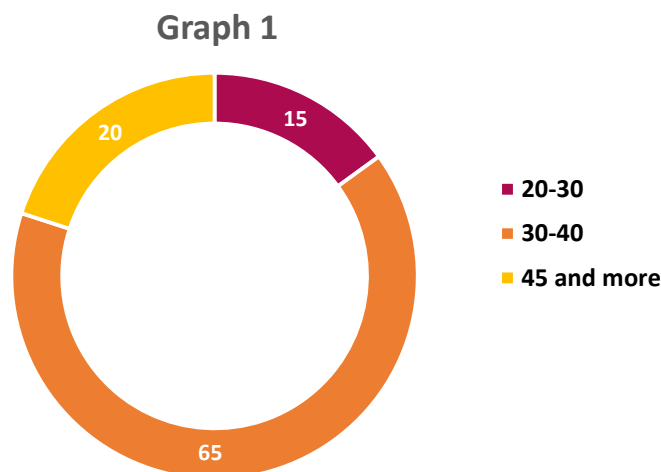
4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the questionnaire results by creating and describing manually created graphs. These twelve questions were answered by twenty respondents. After summarising the overall results, the data will be discussed with three hypotheses stated in the previous chapter and a conclusion will be presented.

4.1 Analysis of the questionnaire

The twelve questions have originally been composed in the Czech language as the targeted respondents were of Czech nationality. However, I have translated the questions into the English language for the purposes of this analysis. The original set of the twelve survey questions in their original language are then enclosed in the appendix. The descriptive numbers on each of the graph sectors represent the percentage out of twenty respondents.

- **Question 1 – What is your age?**

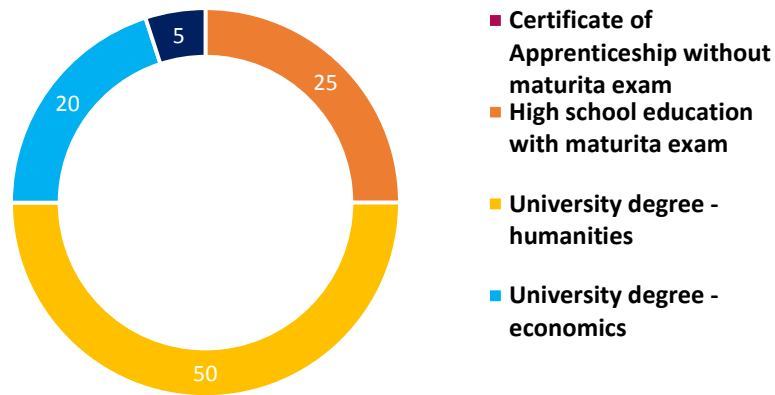


Graph 1. Age of the respondents

The very first question investigated the age of the respondents. It offered three possible closed answers which divided respondents into three groups of 20 to 30, 30 to 40 or above 45 years old. As we can see in the graph, most of the respondents came under the middle option of 30 to 40 years old. Particularly speaking, it was 65 % of the respondents which equals to 13 out of twenty respondents. The other two answer options included 3 respondents for the youngest group and 4 respondents in the oldest group.

- **Question 2 – What is your highest educational achievement?**

Graph 2

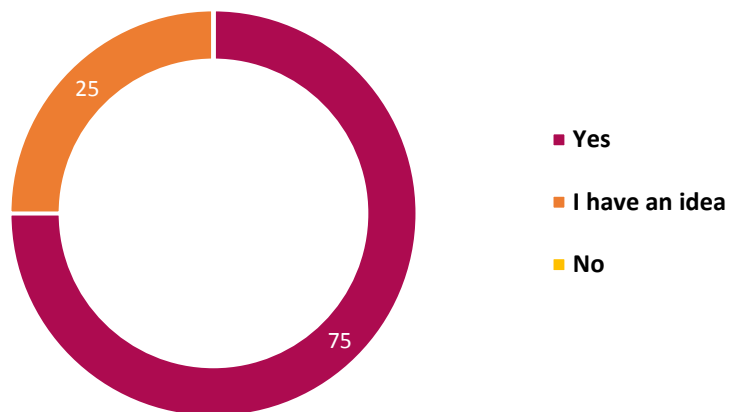


Graph 2. Highest educational achievement of the respondents

The second question concerns the highest level of education achieved by the respondents most of which were the human resources department representatives or management bodies of the company. Exactly a half of the respondents, 50 %, hold an unspecified level of a university degree in the humanities field. A comparable percentage of them achieved a degree in economic disciplines or only passed the matura exam.

- **Question 3 – Do you know Cambridge English language certificates?**

Graph 3

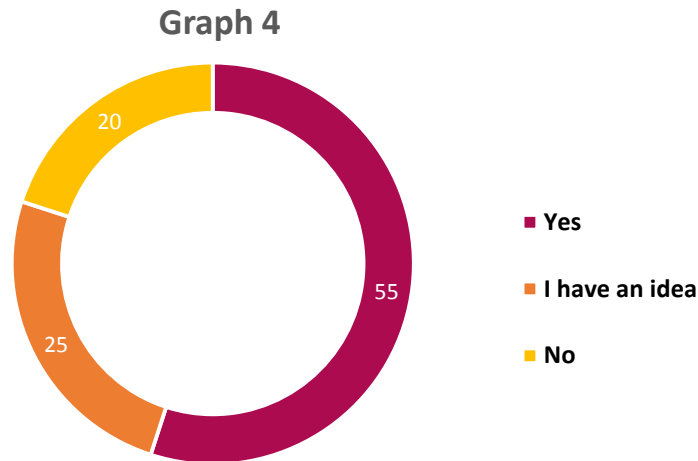


Graph 3. Knowledge of the General Cambridge English certificates

The following two questions investigated the general knowledge of the certificates in the business field. The results of this question show that the general knowledge about Cambridge English certificates is very positive as none of the respondents chose “No” as their answer. 75 % percent of the respondents, which make up 15 out of 20, were confident to say that

they knew Cambridge English exams and the remaining 25 % at least had an idea about their existence.

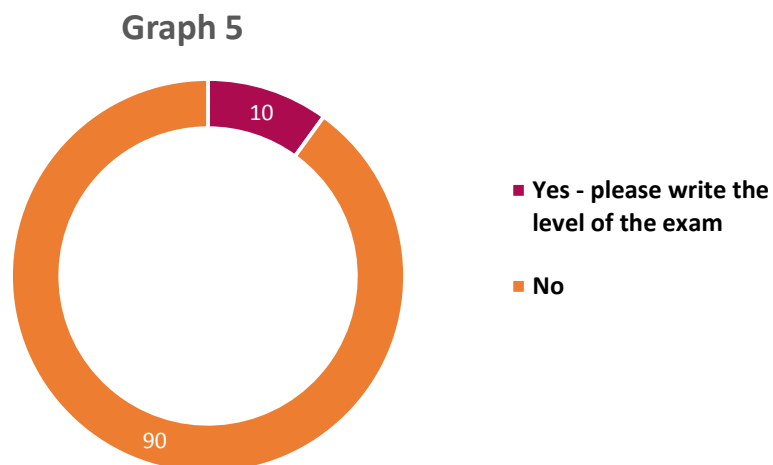
- **Question 4 – Do you know Cambridge English Business language certificates?**



Graph 4. Knowledge of the Business Cambridge English certificates

However, the knowledge of the Business English certificates was of a little bit lower success. In contrast to the general ones, four people marked their answer as “No”, about a half of the respondents claimed to know about these exams. The number of people to say that they at least have a general idea about them was the same as for the general exams.

- **Question 5 – Have you passed any of the Cambridge English exams? If so, which one?**

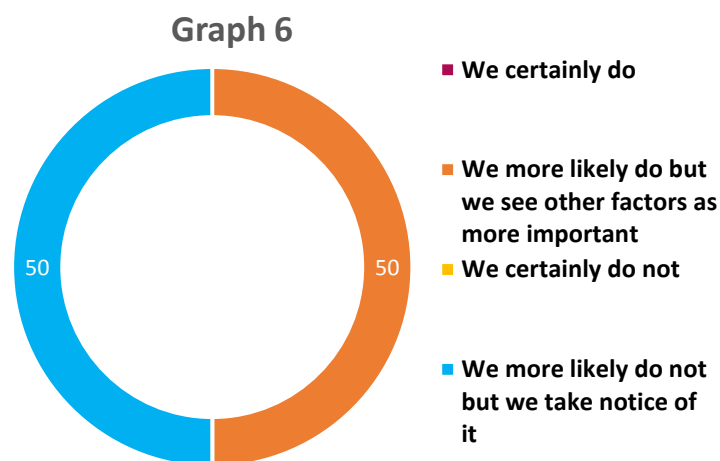


Graph 5. Number of respondents who have passed a Cambridge English exam

Besides from detecting the general knowledge about the Cambridge English certificates I also considered it important to determine how many of the involved respondents passed one the examinations themselves. This question aimed to determine whether respondents who have passed one of the language certificated themselves are more likely to see these certificates as an advantage for the candidates at the recruitment process. The results will be discussed in the chapter 4.2.

However, it was expected that the number of respondents with their own certificate would not be very high. As we can see in the graph, only 2 out of 20 respondents (10 %) passed a language exam. As they were asked to do so, they provided us with the level of their exam. Both claim to pass the FCE exam corresponding to the CEFR B2 level.

- **Question 6 – In the recruitment and hiring process, do you pay attention to candidates having one of the Cambridge English certificates?**



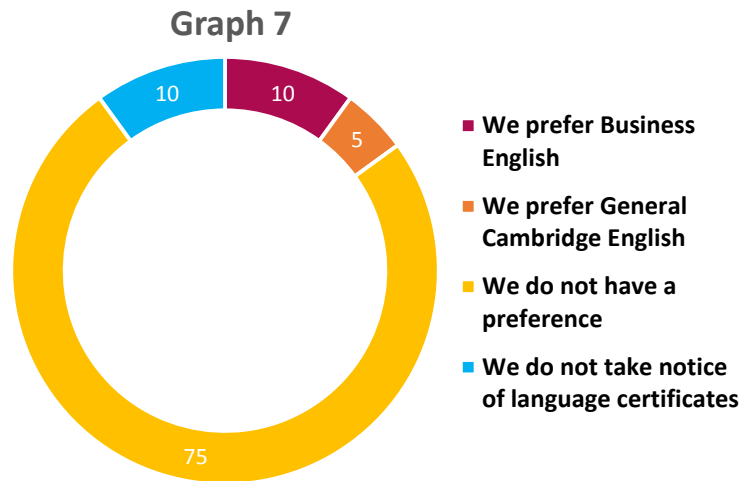
Graph 6. Role of the Cambridge English certificates in the recruitment process

Question 6 is the first one of the questions which will be later discussed with the Hypothesis 1 set in a chapter above. It concerns the role of the Cambridge English certificates in the recruitment and hiring process and whether or not holding one of them is of any importance to the hiring companies.

The results are rather surprising as the business field does not seem to be very certain about the importance of the certificates. 50 % representing 10 respondents agreed that they are more likely to take notice of the appearance of the certificates in a candidate's CV but they rather pay more attention to other skills or features. On the contrary, 50 % claims they are more likely not to pay any conscious attention to the language certificates but they do

take notice when they learn about a candidate holding one. None of the respondents chose of the answers expressing a definite opinion.

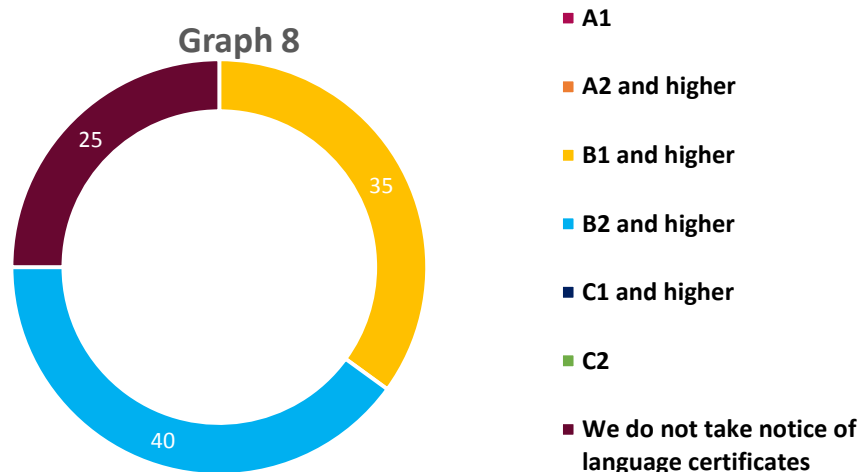
- **Question 7 – Do you prefer candidates having Business English certificate or General English certificate?**



Graph 7. Certificate preference

As the questionnaire found its respondents in the business field, I also intended to research if companies in the Zlín region prefer the Business English Qualifications or they find General English Qualifications a valid enough proof of a candidate’s professional language skills. The majority of the respondents agreed on not having a preference. However, among the rest of the responses there was a higher percentage of respondents preferring Business English certificates of the general ones. Particularly speaking, it was 10% over 5%.

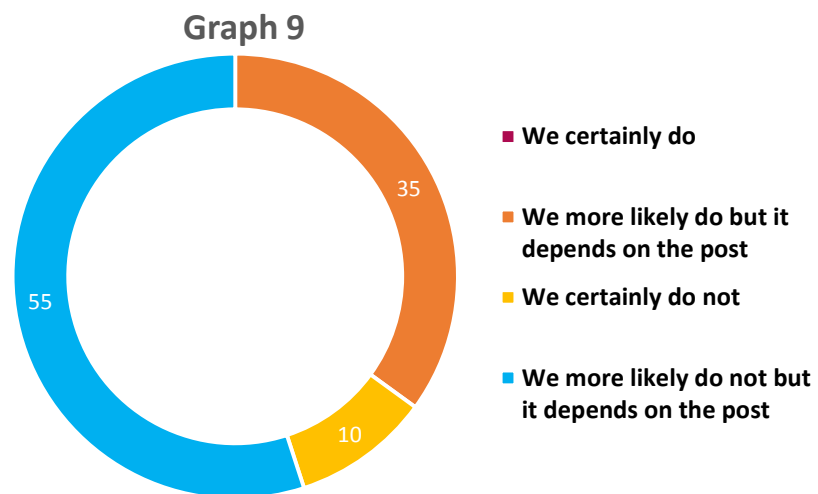
- **Question 8 – What level are you interested in?**



Graph 8. Required level

Question 8 was aimed at those respondents who showed interest in language certificate in some of the previous questions therefore it was expected that 25 % of the respondents stated that they do not take notice of certificates at all. It is then apparent from the graph that the remaining respondents only consider language certificate at the CEFR levels of B1 and higher and B2 and higher. The difference between these two opinions was only 5 % which is only one respondent.

- **Question 9 – Do you give preference to a candidate with a language certificate over other candidates?**

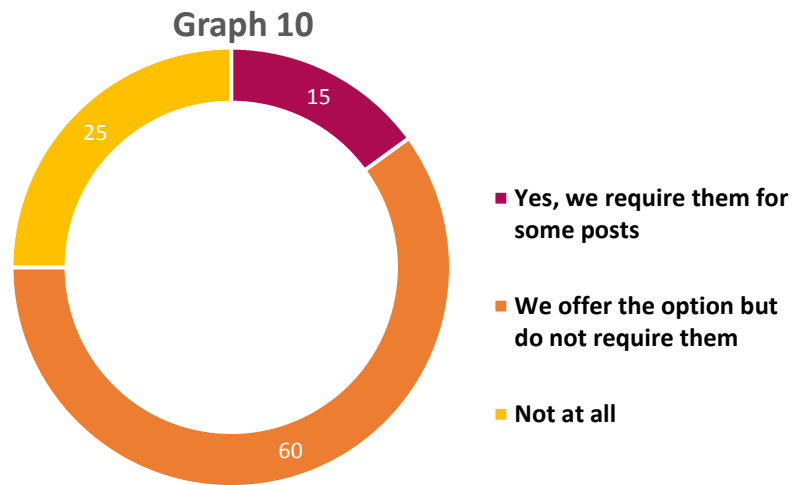


Graph 9. Preference to a candidate with a Cambridge English certificate

Similarly to the results of question 6, 55 % of the respondents would not give preference to a candidate with one of the Cambridge English certificates. 35 % then express again an opinion which does not strictly commit to one possibility. However, in comparison to question 6, 10 % of respondents claims to definitely not give any preference to certificate holders.

Along with question 6, this question will also be a part of the Hypothesis 1 evaluation as it is connected to the position employers take during the process of choosing the right candidate for a post.

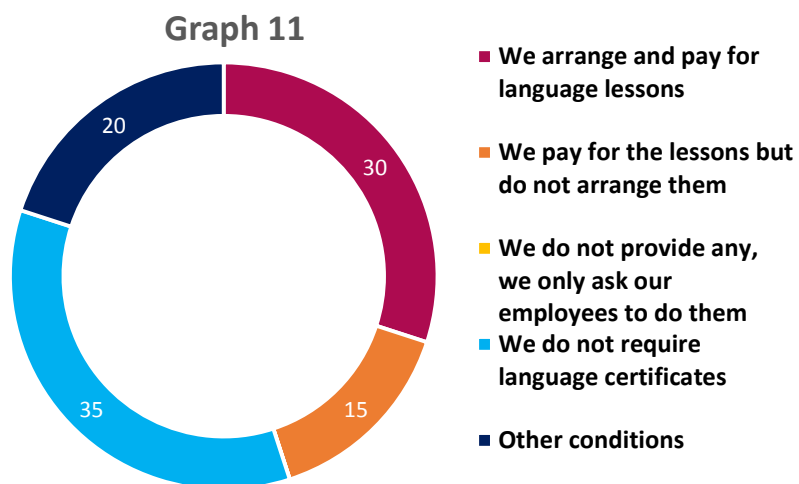
- **Question 10 – Do you possibly encourage your employees to pass one the language exams during their employment?**



Graph 10. Employers encouraging employees to pass a Cambridge English exam

The results show that 60 % of the respondents involved do encourage their employees to pass one of the Cambridge English examinations but they do not require them to do it. Only 3 out of 20 respondents confirmed that for some of their posts it is necessary for their employees to hold a language certificate to prove their language skills.

- **Question 11 – If so, what conditions do you provide to them?**



Graph 11. Conditions employers provide their employees with

Regarding the results of the previous question we found that 35 % of our respondents do not require their employees to hold one of the certificates or to pass one during their employment. On the other hand, 30 % provides full conditions of arranging and covering

language courses for their employees to eventually pass one of the exams. 15% of respondents then only covers the expenses for their employees.

- **Question 12 – Do you require your employees to have perfect grammatical knowledge, pronunciation and accent or do you only pay attention to their abilities to communicate?**

The last question is the only open question included in the questionnaire. Each of the respondents was asked to write an answer in his own words. The results will be further discussed in the following chapter which will evaluate the hypotheses set for the purposes of this research and they included the following answers. The list of individual answers provided below has been translated from the Czech language which is the language in which the responses were collected. The responses in the original language will be enclosed in the appendix.

Answer 1: “The important thing is communication with a customer.”

Answer 2: “Above all is the ability to communicate.”

Answer 3: “Communication with a customer is most important.”

Answer 4: “The capability to communicate is in the first place.”

Answer 5: “The language level and the frequency of using a foreign language for work purposes depend on the work post. For us, the priority is a communicative level which is supported by skills in written language. We give advantage to candidates with immediate reactions and ability to communicate. (certificates are only a prove of language skills at certain level).”

Answer 6: “For us it is important that a candidate is able to communicate with partners with different accents and pronunciation.”

Answer 7: “That they are able to communicate.”

Answer 8: “The level of grammatical skills and correct pronunciation are an advantage but for most work posts it is sufficient that a candidate is able to communicate.”

Answer 9: “It depends on the work post that the candidate works at. The ability to communicate fluently is more substantial for most posts.”

Answer 10: “The capability to communicate and adequate level of grammar is more dominant.”

Answer 11: “Communication.”

Answer 12: “It depends on the work post.”

Answer 13: “For us it is important that the candidates communicates correctly. Written language skills are not that substantial, it is possible to have documents revised or checked by renowned interpreters.

Answer 14: “A candidate needs to be able to communicate.”

Answer 15: “It depends on our requirements for individual work posts. The level of the business meetings that we attend within our work responsibilities or if the candidate mostly communicates in written form are also important.

Answer 16: “Adequate level of grammar skills and mostly ability to communicate without any complications.”

Answer 17: “Communication.”

Answer 18: “At our work post, language skills are more of an advantage rather than a requirement.”

Answer 19: “For our company, advanced language skills in the German language are more important. Communicative level in English is important in the sales department and technical English is then important in the technical department. But we do not require certificates at any posts.”

Answer 20: “The most important thing for us is a basic ability to communicate.”

The results show that overall, the most important thing for companies during the process of hiring new employees is a candidate’s ability to communicate which is mentioned by 19 out of 20 respondents. Five respondents add that these communications skills should be fluent, correct, without complications, immediate and candidates need to understand and adapt to different accents. Four of them add that a candidate’s language skills should be supported by adequate level of grammar skills or appropriate professional vocabulary. Two respondents also mention written skills. It is clear that it depends on the most frequent form of communication within a candidate’s responsibilities. Five respondents then mention that the language level requirements they have for candidates mostly depend on the work post they are applying for. The fact that language certificates are only an advantage and are not strictly required is supported by two respondents.

4.2 Evaluation of the hypotheses

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the three hypotheses stated in chapter 3.4 based on the results of the questionnaire surveys. They are mostly connected to questions 6 and 9 for Hypothesis 1, number 10 for Hypothesis 2 and question number 12 for Hypothesis 3. I will then summarize the results on the following chapter.

- **Hypothesis 1**

Cambridge Certificates are not of big importance to employers in the recruitment process yet they do take notice of them.

This hypothesis analysed data from questions 6 (In the recruitment and hiring process, do you pay attention to candidates having one of the Cambridge English certificates?) and 9 (Do you give preference to a candidate with a language certificate over other candidates?) of the questionnaire. Question number 6 offered three answer options one of which was chosen by 0 respondents. The remaining two, which represented opposite opinions, were each chosen by 50 % of the respondents which leaves the hypothesis neither unconfirmed nor disproved. Similar results can be observed in the second related question, where 55 % of respondents claimed that they are more likely not to give any preference to a candidate with a Cambridge English certificate and 35 % said that they are more likely to. Out of both questions, only 10 % percent of respondents are certain about not preferring candidates holding certificates.

Although the difference in opinions regarding this hypothesis was only 10 % and the vast majority of respondents chose an option open to compromises, we can consider Hypothesis 1 as confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 2**

Employers do not require that their employees pass one of the Cambridge English examinations during the employment.

The evaluation of Hypothesis 2 is rather more unambiguous than the evaluation of the previous hypothesis as up to 60 % of the respondents claim not to require their employees to pass of the Cambridge English exams during their employment. However, even when answering this question, the respondents do not tend to opt for the clear one-sided answer

stated as “Not at all” as only 25 % of respondents did so. Despite this fact, we can regard Hypothesis 2 as confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 3**

The most important skill for employers is their employees’ ability to communicate effectively in the English language and they do not require perfection in grammar or accent.

The results of Hypothesis 3 are definitely the most indisputable out of all three hypotheses. After analysing the open answers from all 20 respondents it was very much obvious that the majority of the involved respondents do give more importance to their employees’ communication skills in English over perfect grammatical skills or accent as 95 % (19 out of 20) of respondents claimed so in their answers. As we saw in the results, many respondents considered good grammar and written language skills as added value to good communicative level of language skills.

4.3 Summary of the analysis

In conclusion, all three hypotheses stated for the purposes of this thesis prior to executing the survey have been confirmed by the analysis. Also, apart from evaluating the hypotheses there were also four other facts which I detected when analysing the results of the survey in the previous chapter.

Firstly, I observed the relationship between the age of the respondents and their attitude towards Cambridge English exams. I specifically analysed the answers in question 6 (In the recruitment and hiring process, do you pay attention to candidates having one of the Cambridge English certificates?). It is obvious from the analysis in chapter 4.2 that the overall opinion remains unclear. However, the following table shows more detailed results. As represented in the table, all respondents in the age category of 20-30 (only 3 respondents out of 20) are more likely not to pay attention to candidates holding a certificate while all respondents from the oldest age category of over 45 years old claim to be more likely to do so. These results can be regarded as rather unexpected.

Table 7. Relationship between age and attitude of respondents

<i>Age Category</i>	<i>We certainly do</i>	<i>We certainly do not</i>	<i>We more likely do</i>	<i>We more likely do not</i>
20-30	0	0	0	3
30-45	0	0	5	7
45 and more	0	0	5	0

Secondly, it was expected that a respondent who holds one of the certificates himself is gives also more importance to his employees passing one of them as well in comparison to the respondents who do not hold a certificate and do not pay attention to them. Therefore, when analysing the results of the questionnaire I intended to investigate this fact. The results confirm this supposition as both respondents who claimed to have an FCE certificate in question 5 (Have you passed any of the Cambridge English exams? If so, which one?) also chose the “We more likely do but we see other factors as more important” answer in question 6 (In the recruitment and hiring process, do you pay attention to candidates having one of the Cambridge English certificates?).

Lastly, the results of question 8 (What level are you interested in?) show that the lowest CEFR level in which respondents (in the case of this survey represented by the human resources department and management bodies) are interested is the B1 level. In this question, out of 75 % of respondents who showed interest in language certificates, 35 % claims to be interested in the B1 level and higher and 40 % in the B2 level. It is then clear that for candidates it is best to pass a B2 level exam.

CONCLUSION

The thesis focused on the role of language certificates and determining their role in the recruitment process in the Zlín region. It described different levels of the examinations and expressed their relation to the Common European Framework of Reference. The second part investigated their potential advantage for candidates searching employment in the Zlín region. The aim of the thesis was to investigate the relevance of passing one of the Cambridge English certificates in the recruitment process and to determine the importance of individual CEFR levels.

The thesis was divided into a theoretical part and the analysis. The first part dealt with the Cambridge Assessment including general information about the organisation, its heritage and their approach towards language learning and teaching. It also provided information about the division, content and assessment of the Cambridge English Assessment examinations. The second part then focused on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) giving general information and history of the document. Secondly, the section described individual CEFR levels focusing on the language skills of candidates at each level and relating them to the corresponding General Cambridge English as Business Cambridge English exam.

The analytical part presented the results of a questionnaire constructed of twelve mostly closed questions focusing on the opinion of employers on language certificates who were chosen under three conditions which were also listed in the work. Firstly, the analysis described the goals of the research, the methodology and the description of the respondents. Furthermore, three hypotheses were stated for the purposes of the research. Secondly, the analytical part presented the results of the survey in graphs supported by a description. The data were then discussed with the stated hypotheses confirming all of them. The conclusion then stated four other facts determined during the analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALTE: Association of Language Testers in Europe

CAE: Certificate in Advanced English

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

CIE: Cambridge International Examinations

CPE: Certificate in Proficiency English

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

FCE: First Certificate in English

KET: Cambridge English Key

OCR: Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations

PET: Preliminary English Test

UCLES: University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate

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APPENDIX – ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**1. Jaký je Váš věk?**

- a. 20-30
- b. 30-45
- c. 45 a více

2. Jaké je vaše nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání?

- a. Výuční list bez maturitní zkoušky
- b. Střední škola/Gymnázium s maturitou
- c. Vysokoškolské vzdělání – humanitní obor
- d. Vysokoškolské vzdělání – ekonomický obor
- e. Jiná...

3. Znáte jazykové certifikáty Cambridge English?

- a. Ano
- b. Mám tušení
- c. Ne

4. Znáte jazykové certifikáty Business English Certificates?

- a. Ano
- b. Mám tušení
- c. Ne

5. Absolvovali jste vy sami jednu ze zkoušek? Pokud ano, jakou?

- a. Ano – napiště prosím typ a úroveň zkoušky
- b. Ne

6. Zajímá Vás při procesu přijímání nových zaměstnanců, zda má kandidát jeden z jazykových certifikátů?

- a. Určitě ano
- b. Spíše ano, ale jiné faktory jsou pro nás důležitější
- c. Určitě ne

d. Spíše ne, ale zaujme nás to

7. Záleží Vám na tom, zda má kandidát certifikát Business English Certificate anebo obecný Cambridge English?

- a. Upřednostníme Business English
- b. Upřednostníme Cambridge English
- c. Ne, je nám to jedno
- d. Certifikáty nás nezajímají

8. Jaká úroveň Vás zajímá?

- a. A1
- b. A2 a vyšší
- c. B1 a vyšší
- d. B2 a vyšší
- e. C1 a vyšší
- f. C2
- g. Certifikáty nás nezajímají

9. Upřednostníte kandidáta s jazykovým certifikátem zásadně před ostatními?

- a. Určitě ano
- b. Spíše ano, ale záleží na pozici
- c. Určitě ne
- d. Spíše ne, ale záleží na pozici

10. Podporujete zaměstnance, aby jazykovou zkoušku případně během zaměstnání složili?

- a. Ano, u určitých pozic to vyžadujeme
- b. Možnost nabídneme, ale nevyžadujeme
- c. Vůbec ne

11. Pokud ano, jaké jim k tomu poskytnete podmínky?

- a. Zařídíme a zaplatíme kurzy
- b. Zaplatíme kurzy, které si zaměstnanci sami vyberou
- c. Žádné, pouze je k tomu vyzveme

- d. Jiné podmínky
- e. Certifikáty nevyžadujeme

12. Je pro Vás důležitá vysoká gramatická úroveň a správná výslovnost i přízvuk anebo je pro Vás pouze důležité, aby byl kandidát schopný komunikovat?

Odpovědi:

1. Důležitá je komunikace se zákazníkem.
2. Je pro nás důležité, aby kandidát byl schopen komunikovat s partnery s různými přízvuky a výslovností
3. Komunikace
4. Odpovídají gramatická úroveň a hlavně schopnost komunikovat bez komplikací
5. záleží na pozici
6. Schopnost komunikace především
7. Je pro nás důležité aby kandidát komunikoval správně. Písemná úroveň není tak podstatná, lze dát dokumenty k revizi nebo renomovaným tlumočnickům.
8. Komunikace
9. Aby byl schopný komunikovat.
10. důležitá je komunikace se zákazníkem
11. na naší pozici je jazyková znalost spíše výhodou než přijímacím požadavkem.
12. Gramatická úroveň i správná výslovnost je výhodou, ale u většiny pozic je dostačující, že je kandidát schopen komunikovat.
13. Schopnost komunikace na prvním místě.
14. Pro naši společnost je důležitá spíše němčina na vysoké úrovni, angličtina na komunikativní úrovni je pro nás důležitá na pozicích v obchodním oddělení, v technickém oddělení je zase potřeba technická angličtina. Certifikáty však na žádné pozici nevyžadujeme.
15. Záleží na pracovní pozici, kde je požadavek jazykové úrovně a jak často využívá při výkonu své práce. Prioritou je komunikativní úroveň, kterou doplňuje i písemný projev. V rámci výběru kandidátů upřednostňujeme bezprostřední reakci a schopnost komunikace s kandidáty (certifikát pouze dokládá znalost jazyka na dané úrovni).
16. Kandidát musí být schopný komunikovat
17. Jedná se, na jaké pozici je kandidát zařazen. Pro většinu pozic je podstatnější schopnost plynulé komunikace.

18. V závislosti na požadavcích, které klademe na danou pracovní pozici. Důležitá je rovněž úroveň obchodní a jiných jednání, kterých se v rámci plnění svých povinností zúčastňuje nebo zda v rámci svých povinností převážně komunikuje se zákazníky písemnou formou.
19. Dominantní je dovednost komunikace a přiměřeně kvalitní gramatická způsobilost.
20. Nejdůležitější je pro nás základní schopnost komunikace